



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: March 4, 2005 (05-07)
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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Collection sites near Spokane, Ritzville, Othello, Pullman, Saint John, Dayton and Pasco

Sign up by March 18 for free disposal events at the Eastern Washington Pesticide Round-Up

OLYMPIA — Farmers, residents, business owners and public agencies can safely dispose of old or unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides without paying hazardous waste disposal fees. Seven collection events will be held April 19 through April 29 in Eastern Washington, sponsored by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) in cooperation with local agencies and businesses.

The Eastern Washington Pesticide Round-Up includes collection events near Spokane on April 19, Ritzville on April 20, Othello on April 21, Pullman on April 26, Saint John on April 27, Dayton on April 28 and Pasco on April 29. To participate, you need to sign up by March 18.

Customer sign up by March 18 is requested to allow time for WSDA personnel to process disposal inventory information, obtain necessary permits, and provide growers with any necessary pre-event on-farm assistance. Customers will receive directions to the site, hours of operation, and needed transportation documents. To sign up, call (360) 902-2056, toll free (877) 301-4555 or send e-mail to wastepesticide@agr.wa.gov.

Pesticides accepted by WSDA include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and most chemicals that kill, repel or prevent unwanted pests. Empty containers and other waste, such as fertilizers, motor oil and household hazardous waste are not accepted for disposal by this program.

Leaky containers or improper pesticide disposal may create serious health problems for humans and animals, contaminate drinking water supplies or cause significant environmental damage. It is also very expensive and difficult to clean up contaminated soil or water. These problems can be prevented by proper disposal of pesticides that are no longer needed. WSDA will provide customers with supplies necessary to protect broken or leaky containers to ensure safe transportation to the collection site.

WSDA also provides a disposal opportunity for persons who are quitting business or selling property and are stuck with pesticides they will never use. In some cases, a storage room containing pesticides can delay a property transaction.

“We also hope to reach new property owners who may find barrels, bottles or cans of unknown substances left behind by the previous owner,” said Joe Hoffman, WSDA disposal program coordinator. “A mystery container with unknown contents may be the most hazardous feature of your new property, especially if

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you have curious children or the container is leaking. We will help to identify the contents and, if it is a pesticide, we will arrange to have it removed at no cost to you.”

Customers transport unwanted agricultural and commercial grade pesticides to the collection site where WSDA takes possession of them and a hazardous waste contractor packs them for safe and legal transportation and disposal.

Customer names do not appear on any manifests or disposal documents. “We are responsible for the pesticides once we take possession of them,” Hoffman added. “We become the owner of the pesticides before they are turned over to the contractor. By becoming the owner of the pesticides, WSDA and our hazardous waste contractor assume any future long-term liability. That is significant because owners of hazardous materials are usually responsible for life for the cost of disposal or any environmental cleanup that may be needed should a transportation accident or disposal site release occur.”

Hoffman also said people who take the time to properly dispose of unwanted pesticides are helping to prevent potential environmental accidents or human health tragedies.

“Our program may not get a lot of media attention, but the prevention aspect of our successes should not be overlooked,” Hoffman said. “With proper disposal, you won’t read the newspaper article about someone’s grandchild who was poisoned by the old endrin (insecticide) can under the tarp in the back of the shed, because it’s no longer there. You also won’t read about the widow needing to sell the property to pay the clean-up and disposal bill for the pesticide ‘museum’ her deceased husband left behind, because she took advantage of the free disposal offer and all of her pesticides were properly disposed.”

“As a grower myself, I know there are pesticides no longer being used that farmers want to remove from their property,” said Mike McCormick, WSDA pesticide disposal specialist from Yakima.

Last fiscal year, a record 218,787 pounds of unwanted pesticides were collected statewide in the program, managed by the Pesticide Management Division. WSDA has sponsored regional collection events since 1988. To date, more than 5,100 customers have properly disposed of 1.65 million pounds of waste pesticides.

In addition to calling or using e-mail to sign up for the Pesticide Round-Up, you may write to the Waste Pesticide Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture, PO Box 42589, Olympia, WA 98504-2589. For more information, visit WSDA’s Web site at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/Pesticides/WastePesticide.htm>.

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